Guide for Accredited Private School Planning and Results Reporting

For Education Plans 2005/06 – 2007/08 (May 2005) and AERRs, November 2005 and 2006

May 2005

Alberta
EDUCATION

Guide for Accredited Private School Planning and Results Reporting

Requirements for private school authorities.

This guide is intended for funded, accredited private schools that provide a complete elementary, junior high and/or senior high school program.

For more information or for additional copies of this document, contact

Sharon Campbell, Executive Director
Performance Measurement and Reporting
Alberta Education
9th floor, Commerce Place, 10155 – 102 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4L5

Phone: (780) 427-8217 (in Edmonton)
310-0000 (toll free within Alberta)
Fax: (780) 422-5255 Email: <measurement.learning@gov.ab.ca>

ISSN 1715-2674

Comments?

Send an email to <measurement.learning@gov.ab.ca>.

Copyright © 2005 by the Crown in right of Alberta as represented by the Minister of Education.

Permission is given by the copyright owner for any person to reproduce this publication or any part thereof for educational purposes and on a non-profit basis.

May 2005

Guide for Accredited Private School Planning and Results Reporting

For Education Plans 2005/06 – 2007/08 (May 2005) and AERRs, November 2005 and 2006

What's Changed? ii

1 **Background** 1

2 **Education Plans for Accredited Private School Authorities** 3

An Overview of the Process 3

The Components and Requirements of the Education Plan (2005/06 - 2007/08) 5

3 **Results Report** 8

An Overview of the Process 8

The Components and Requirements of the Annual Education Results Report for 2005/06 School Year 10

Appendices

1. Performance Measurement 12
2. Measuring Performance Through Surveys 14
3. Setting Targets for Performance Measures 18
4. Planning and Accountability Terms 22
5. References 24
6. Revised Reporting Requirements for November 2005 AERR 25

May 2005

What's Changed?

The information in the guide has been reformatted and streamlined for clarity and to reduce duplication. Changes since the April draft are highlighted.

Accredited private school authorities' Plans and AERRs:	Page
The following changes to requirements start with the November 2005 AERRs, and also apply to education plans for 2005-08 and November 2006 AERRs: - The required measure for Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs) is cohort results. Reporting results for writers is optional.	7, 25
The following change applies to the education plans for 2005-08 and the November 2006 AERR: - There are specified measures for each outcome selected from the set of measures developed by the Review Committee on Outcomes (RCO) for the K-12 education system. - The professional development measure has been restated to better reflect the survey question.	7 7
The following change applies to November 2006 AERRs: - In addition to reporting the most recent five years of data for performance measures, private authorities report a three-year rolling average for the most recent three years of results.	10
What's Been Deleted	
Provincial priority areas for improvement and strategies and measures for each priority in authorities' plans, and reporting on these in authorities AERRs, are no longer required.	
Specific strategies and measures for special student populations, for provincial initiatives, and for Commission on Learning recommendations are no longer required in private school plans. Results for special populations are included in overall results.	
Links are no longer included to reduce duplication; all requirements for 2005/06 are listed in the main sections of the document, and the 2004/05 revised reporting requirements are in an Appendix.	
Four appendices from the 2004 Guide have been removed: - Legislative authority (covered in the background section), - the Definition of Basic Education (available in the Guide to Education online at: <http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/educationguide>), - the list of outcomes and measures developed by the Review Committee on Outcomes (available online at <http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/rco/Finalized.asp>) and - provincial results and targets for required measures available in Alberta Education's Business Plan for 2005-08 online at: <http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/department/businessplan/>.	
The survey instruments were removed from the appendix on surveys. These are available online at <http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/educationsystem/Satisfaction/>.	

105-07446

Section 1

Background

Section 16(2) of the Government Accountability Act requires organizations under the jurisdiction of government ministries to prepare business plans and annual reports for each fiscal year "in the form and at a time acceptable to the Minister."

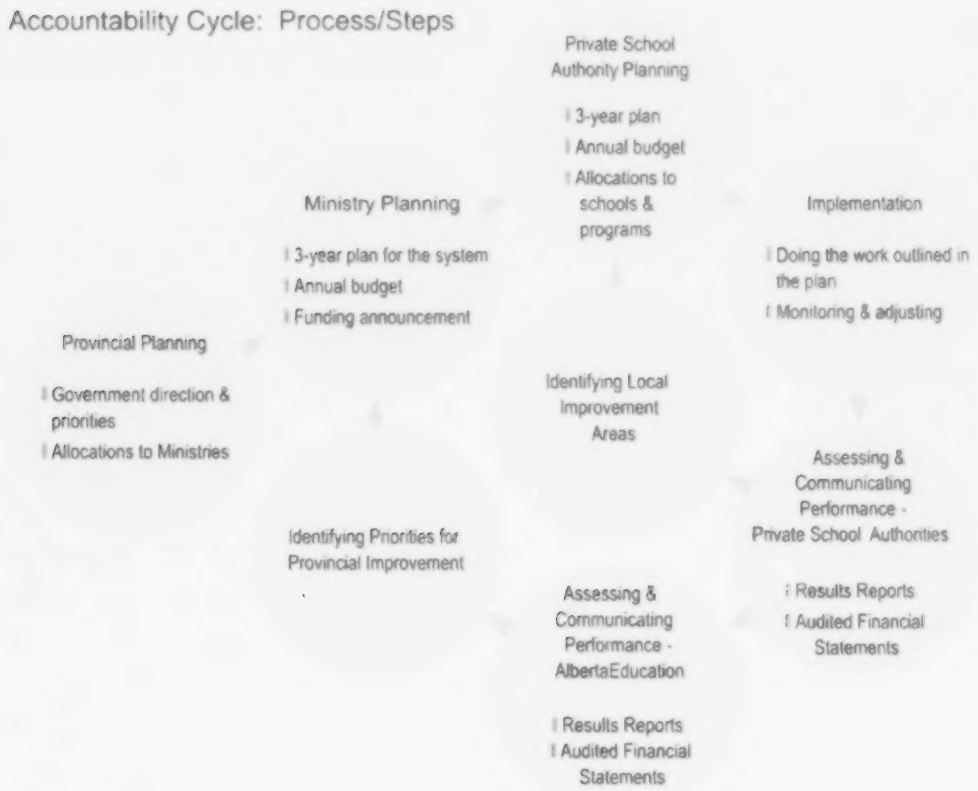
This guide has been prepared to assist Alberta's accredited private school authorities in preparing, updating and reporting on their three-year education plans. Accredited private school authority plans and reports align with and build on Alberta Education's vision, mission, goals and outcomes for the basic education system. In this way, they help ensure that the entire learning system is focused on key priorities that meet the educational needs of Alberta students. At the same time, accredited private school authority plans and reports incorporate local goals, priorities and outcomes that reflect the unique characteristics and circumstances of their communities. In short, they reflect local needs and priorities within the context of a province-wide framework.

Accountability Framework

Accountability in the basic education system is an ongoing cycle that enables continuous improvement and critical reflection. Key components are measuring progress and using results to inform decision making. For accredited private school authorities, the cycle involves:

- developing plans aligned with provincial goals and outcomes;
- incorporating community input;
- identifying and implementing strategies to improve student learning;
- allocating resources to achieve goals and improve results;
- monitoring progress;
- measuring and assessing results;
- using results to identify priorities and design or adjust strategies; and
- communicating with stakeholders (staff, learners, parents, school councils, the public, and Alberta Education) about private school plans and results.

Figure 1: The accountability framework links each level of planning and fosters continuous improvement throughout the basic education system.



Section 2

Education Plans for Accredited Private School Authorities

An Overview of the Process

Preparing Education Plans

The education plans prepared by accredited private school authorities encompass a three-year cycle, updated each year and aligned with Alberta Education's three-year plan. As one year is completed, another is added. At the same time, strategies and priorities are adjusted in response to the past year's performance results and changes in the operating environment. This approach allows private school authorities to be responsive to students and community needs while focusing on continuous improvement and maintaining continuity from year to year.

The ultimate responsibility for a private school authority's three-year education plan rests with the board of directors that is accountable for the plan. The board of directors provides overall direction for the education plan. In consultation with parents, the board of directors and school staff and other stakeholders in their community, the private school authority administration develops a planning process that meets private school authority needs and is responsible for preparing the content of the plan for approval by the board of directors.

Updating Education Plans

Private school authorities update their three-year education plans each year. Annual updates take the following considerations into account:

- private school authority results
- input from stakeholders such as parent advisory councils, students, parents and the school community
- available resources
- Alberta Education's annual three-year business plan and performance results

Although entirely new plans are prepared infrequently; components such as strategies and targets are updated each year, and components such as the vision, mission and beliefs (foundation statements) should be revisited and

refreshed every few years. Such reviews are particularly appropriate when a new board begins its term.

Communicating Education Plans

Three-year education plans are public documents. Private school authorities are encouraged to use a variety of methods to communicate their plans and their achievements to the broader school community. Appropriate tools may include newsletter inserts, brochures, private school authority report cards and community meetings.

A private school authority education plan must identify how the plan was or will be communicated to the school community.

Reviewing Education Plans

Private school authorities do not submit their updated three-year plans to Alberta Education each year, but keep them as working documents. These plans are reviewed by education managers during regularly scheduled on-site monitoring. On-site reviews focus on alignment with provincial requirements and commitment to improvement, specifically evidence that prior years' results have been taken into account and the plan includes actions (strategies) to improve performance where there are shortfalls.

Due Dates

Three-year education plans for private school authorities are to be completed by May 31 of each year.

Note: The deadline for completing the 2005/06 – 2007/08 plan has been extended to June 24, 2005.

The Components and Requirements of Education Plans

[Components are required unless otherwise identified. Components are defined in Appendix 4, page 22]

Education plans for 2005/06 – 2007/08 include the following components:

- A **message** from the board chair (optional).
- An **accountability statement**, worded as follows:
  The Education Plan for (name of private school authority) the three years commencing September 1, (year) was prepared under the direction of the private school authority's Board of Directors in accordance with the responsibilities specified in the *School Act*, the *Government Accountability Act*, Alberta Education Policy 2.1.1 ("Accountability in Education: School Authority Accountability") and the provincial government's accounting policies. This Education Plan was developed in the context of the provincial government's business and fiscal plans. The Board of Directors is committed to achieving the results laid out in this plan.
- Information on how the plan was or will be communicated to parents and the school community. Also include a link to the plan posted on the private school authority's website.
- **Foundation statements** (optional) (i.e., vision, mission, principles and beliefs) that articulate the private school authority's values and purpose. If included, these are consistent with the corresponding statements in Alberta Education's business plan.
  - **vision:** describes a possible and desired future state that the authorities strives to achieve; it focuses on student achievement and programs or services that maximize student learning.
  - **mission:** provides a clear, concise description of the private school authority's purpose and role.
  - **principles and beliefs:** provide statements of the principles and beliefs that guide the private school authority's decision-making.
- A **profile of the private school authority** (optional). Profiles include information about the authorities, such as:
  - characteristics of communities and students
  - education programs
  - schools (size, location and other details)
  - planning environment, including emerging trends and issues that affect operations.
- **Provincial goals, related outcomes, priorities, performance measures and targets.** Required goals, outcomes priorities and performance measures are listed on page 7. Include the most recent year of private school authority results for all the required measures for which there

is data. For new measures, include the measure statement and indicate the measure is under development. For achievement tests, include private school authority and provincial results and targets for each subject and grade, and for overall results (all subjects and grades combined). Set improvement targets for achievement test measures for which there is more than one year of comparable data, as follows:

- a target for the first year of the plan when there are two years of results,
- targets for two years when there are three years of results,
- targets for all three years of the plan when there are four or more years of results,
- for the provincial targets for the achievement tests, see Alberta Education's business plan for 2005-08, online at <http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/department/businessplan/>.

Targets for required measures need to focus on improvement.

- **Budget highlights.** This section presents highlights from the private school authority's budget for the first year of the three-year plan in a way that is easily understood, transparent and meaningful to the school community. Budget highlights must provide key financial information about the upcoming school year, focusing on anticipated material changes from the current year. This section may refer to budgeted changes in enrolment, certificated and un-certificated staff, programs, funding, revenues and expenses, annual surpluses or deficits and accumulated surpluses. This section must include:
  - Guiding principles the private school authority uses in financial planning.
  - Charts/tables that summarize information from the private school authority's budget.
  - Information on how to access the private school authority's Budget Report Form.

- **Highlights of facility and capital plans.** (optional) This section, if included, presents information of interest to parents and the school community on capital projects, such as:
  - A brief description of major school renewal or construction projects underway or planned over the next three years (if applicable) and their benefit to students.
  - A brief description of the private school authority's capital priorities.
  - How to access more detailed information on the private school authority's facility and capital plans.

A prototype for private school three-year education plans 2005/06 – 2007/08 is on Alberta Education's website <http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/funding>.

Required Goals, Outcomes, and Performance Measures

Listed below are all the required goals, outcomes and performance measures for private school authority three-year education plans for 2005/06 to 2007/08.

Goal 1: High Quality Learning Opportunities for All

Outcome: The education system meets the needs of all learners, society and the economy.

- Percentage of teachers, parents and students satisfied with the opportunity for students to receive a broad program of studies including fine arts, career, technology, and health and physical education. (**new**)
- Percentage of teachers, parents and students satisfied with the overall quality of basic education. (**new**)
- Percentage of teachers, parents and students satisfied with services for students in schools (e.g., academic counseling, career counseling, library services, supports for students with special needs).

Outcome: Schools are safe and caring.

- Percentage of teacher, parent and student agreement that: students are safe at school, are learning the importance of caring for others, are learning respect for others and are treated fairly in school. (**new**)

Outcome: Children at risk have their needs addressed through effective programs and supports.

- Annual dropout rate of students age 14 to 18 (for high schools, under development by Alberta Education). (**new**)
- Percentages of students, parents and teachers who agree that services and supports for students at risk are easy to access and timely (for K – 9 private schools). (**new**)

Goal 2: Excellence in Learner Outcomes

Outcome: Learners demonstrate high standards.

- Percentages of students who achieve the acceptable standard, and the percentages who achieve the standard of excellence on Grades 3, 6 and 9 Provincial Achievement Tests (cohort results). Targets are required for each grade and subject at the acceptable and excellence levels, and for the overall results (combined all subjects and grades). Results for writers optional.
- Percentages of students who achieve the acceptable standard and percentages who achieve the standard of excellence on diploma examinations. **(Targets not required for diploma examinations until there are two years of directly comparable results.)**
- Participation rates of Grade 12 students in diploma examination courses.
- Percentages of Grade 12 students eligible for Rutherford scholarships. (**new**) Data will be provided to private schools on the Extranet.

Outcome: Learners complete programs.

- Percentages of students who completed high school within three, four and five years of entering Grade10 (for high schools, under development by Alberta Education). (**new**)

Outcome: Learners are well prepared for lifelong learning.

- High school to post-secondary transition rate within four and six years of entering Grade 10 (for high schools, under development by Alberta Education). (**new**)
- Survey measure for parents, teachers and students on lifelong learning (under development by Alberta Education for use in K – 9 private schools). (**new**)

Outcome: Learners are well prepared for employment.

- Percentages of teachers and parents who agree that students are taught attitudes and behaviours that will make them successful at work when they finish school. (**new**)

Outcome: Learners are well prepared for citizenship.

- Percentages of teachers, parents and students who are satisfied that students model the characteristics of active citizenship. (**new**)

Goal 3: Highly Responsive and Responsible Jurisdiction

Outcome: Improved results through effective working relationships with partners and stakeholders.

- Percentage of teachers and parents satisfied with parental involvement in decisions about their child's education. (**new**)

Outcome: The jurisdiction demonstrates leadership and continuous improvement.

- Percentages of teachers and parents indicating that their school has improved or stayed the same the last three years. (**new**)
- Percentages of teachers who agree that professional development opportunities made available through the school authority are focused on priorities and effectively address their ongoing professional development needs.

Section 3

Results Report

An Overview of the Process

Preparing Results Reports

Each year, private school authorities measure their performance and report on their progress toward achieving the goals and outcomes of their three-year education plans in their Annual Education Results Report (AERR). The performance measure results are a primary source of information for assessing and reporting on performance, and for determining where improvements are needed.

The annual results report informs stakeholders where the private school authority is in relation to where it wants to be in achieving its goals and outcomes. It demonstrates that the Board of Directors is accountable for results and for the wise use of resources to provide quality programs for students and to address areas for improvement. AERRs provide private schools with the opportunity to summarize their accomplishments, in addition to reporting on performance.

In preparing their results reports, private school authorities compile and assess information that pertains to the performance measures identified in their three-year education plans. This information comes from:

- Alberta Education (which provides results for provincially required objective measures on the Extranet):
  - results from provincial achievement tests and high school diploma examinations, high school completion, dropout, post-secondary transition and Rutherford scholarship rates,
- School authority sources, including surveys* used to collect information for local performance measures.

* To support private school authorities in their local efforts to survey stakeholders, Alberta Education prepared a useful handbook, *How to Conduct Satisfaction Surveys: A Practical Guide to Conducting Surveys within Alberta's Education System*. The handbook can be downloaded from the department's website: <http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/educationsystem/Satisfaction>.

The Alberta Education surveys used to collect information for jurisdiction education results reports may provide useful examples for private school authorities, and are available in PDF format on the department's website: <http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/educationsystem/Satisfaction>

Reporting-Related Communications

Annual education results reports are public documents. Private school authorities are required to share their AERR with their school community. They also keep their AERR on file and forward to their zone director a completed AERR Summary Form that extracts key information from the full AERR. They are also encouraged to use tools such as websites, newspaper inserts, brochures and community meetings to make the information more broadly accessible.

Reporting information that is summarized for public distribution must include results for all performance measures identified in the private school authority's three-year education plan.

A private school authority's annual education results report must be approved by the Board of Directors and be kept on file. The report must be available to community members and department staff upon request and must identify how the information in the report was or will be communicated to the school community.

Reviewing Results Reports

Private school authorities submit their AERR Summary Form to Alberta Education. Alberta Education will review the full AERR during regular onsite monitoring.

Due Dates

Private school authorities' annual education results reports are **to be completed by November 30** of each year, for the previous school year. The reports must be available for review by the department staff.

Reviewing Annual Education Results Reports

Alberta Education staff review private school authorities' annual education results reports on a rotational basis to assess

- identification of priorities and actions where there are shortfalls in performance,
- alignment with provincial requirements,
- consistency with the related education plan, and
- implications for the department's planning and priority-setting.

The department prepares a summary report of the findings for use by ministry staff that also is shared with private school administrators.

The Components of an Accredited Private School Annual Education Results Report
for 2005/06 (due November 30, 2006)

[Components are required unless otherwise specified. Components are defined in Appendix 4, page 22.]

Annual education results reports include the following components:

- A **message** from the board chair (optional)
- An **accountability statement**, worded as follows:
  The annual education results report for ***(name of private school authority)*** for the ***(year)*** school year was prepared under the direction of the board in accordance with the responsibilities specified in the School Act, the Government Accountability Act, Alberta Education Policy 2.1.1 ("Accountability in Education: School Private school authority Accountability") and the provincial government's accounting policies. The Board of Directors is committed to using the results in this report, to the best of our abilities, to improve the quality of education for students in our authorities. We will use the results to develop sound strategies for our three-year education plan to ensure that all our students can acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to be self-reliant, responsible, caring and contributing members of society.
- Information on how the report was or will be communicated to parents and the school community.
- Highlights for the previous school year of the private school authority's **accomplishments** (impact of major activities/strategies), including provincially funded initiatives and programs (e.g., AISI, SHIP, ECS) as appropriate.
- Report the private school authority's **performance measures results** in relation to their goals and outcomes (see page 7 for list of required measures), including:
  - the most recent five years of authority results; for provincial achievement tests and diploma exams, also include provincial results,
  - the three-year rolling average authority and provincial results (three most recent years) for measures with at least three years of results,
  - the 2005/06 results in relation to private school authority targets for that year; for achievement tests also report the provincial targets, and
  - assessment of results (e.g., improved, no change, declined; met or did not meet targets) and factors affecting performance.
- Identify **future challenges**, including areas for improvement and how the authority will address these.

- **Summary of financial results:**
  - provide key financial information about the school year, such as significant changes over the prior year, the annual operating surplus or deficit, accumulated operating surplus, and capital reserves,
  - include program expenditure information in a table or graph format for the primary audience – parents and other members of the community;
  - indicate how the reader can access additional information, including the Audited Financial Statement.
- **Capital and facilities projects:** (optional) highlight for parents and the school community progress on major facilities projects for the previous school year, as applicable, focusing on benefits to students.

Appendix 1

Performance Measurement

Performance measures in school authority and school plans and results reports provide information on achievement of outcomes on key aspects of the education system. This information is an essential part of accountability that enables the organization to:

- Assess and report on progress, what is working well and what needs improvement.
- Determine priorities for improvement and set improvement targets.
- Make program and budget decisions to maintain good performance and improve performance in areas requiring improvement.

Measures typically provide quantifiable information on key aspects of education. This information is generated quantitatively through tests, surveys, and data analysis or through qualitative means, such as observation, interviews and portfolio reviews. Whether quantitative or qualitative, measures demonstrate observable change. To be meaningful, measures information is obtained regularly (e.g., annually) and is normally expressed in percentages, ratios or numbers in relation to a total.

Types of Performance Measures

- **Outcome measures:** These provide information on progress toward desired results in key areas – effectiveness of programs, impacts on clients.
- **Intermediate outcome measures:** For some desired outcomes, results may not be known for several years. In such instances, it is useful to measure intermediate steps – milestones or landmarks – toward the desired outcome.

The measures in private school authority and school plans and in results reports focus on outcomes and constitute the core set of measures for assessing and reporting on progress and achievement.

Other types of measures, listed below, are important for managing resources, providing programs and services, and reporting contextual information:

- **Output measures:** information on number of clients served and types of services provided.

- **Process measures:** information on activity and efficiency. These measures indicate demand for services and cost per unit of providing service.
- **Input measures:** information on resources allocated to programs, such as funding, personnel, and equipment. These measures provide information on cost or numbers of staff involved in providing programs and services.

Characteristics of good performance measures

Good performance measures provide information that is:

- Understandable – clear and sufficient to provide an understanding of the organization or system to staff, community and government
- Valid – meaningful and credible (sound, defensible)
- Relevant and appropriate – timely, related to important aspects
- Reliable – unbiased, error-free and verifiable
- Comparable – show change over time and/or among similar organizations
- Discrete – provides information in distinct, non-overlapping categories
- Empowering – useful for decision making, promote improvement
- Practical – can be reliably assessed with reasonable effort

References:

Alberta Treasury, *Measuring Performance: A Reference Guide*, September 1996. On the Internet at <http://www.finance.gov.ab.ca/publications/measuring/>. Click on "Other Alberta performance measurement documents."

Alberta Auditor General, *Government Accountability*, February 1997. On the Internet at <http://www.oag.ab.ca/>. Click on "The Reading Room."

Appendix 2

Measuring Performance Through Surveys

Introduction

Gathering feedback and perspectives from stakeholders and beneficiaries of the learning system provides insight on the attitudes and opinions of Albertans on the performance of the learning system. Conducting survey research is an important tool for determining what is working well, where improvement is required and how it can be achieved.

School Authority Surveys

Many private school authorities routinely conduct surveys with a variety of client groups. These surveys provide a wealth of information that informs management and decision making. Private school authorities may choose to include additional survey measures in their three-year plans as measures for provincial or local goals and to report these survey results in their AERRs.

Survey Resources

There are many published resources on conducting surveys. To assist private school authorities in planning, designing and implementing surveys, a handbook was prepared (under contract to Alberta Learning) and tailored to the type of surveys conducted by school authorities. This document, *How to Conduct Satisfaction Surveys: A Practical Guide to Conducting Surveys within Alberta's Learning System*, is available online at <http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/educationsystem/Satisfaction/>and describes in detail (pages 4-33) the key steps from the following checklist for those involved in conducting satisfaction surveys in Alberta's basic learning system.

Phases of the Survey Process

Planning a Survey

- Develop a description of the satisfaction survey project.
- Define the survey population (students, parents, teachers or citizens).
- Identify key research questions or objectives.
- Establish the project budget and timelines, including determining if the survey will be conducted in-house or contracted to a survey research firm.

Designing the Survey

- Determine the data collection techniques.
- Design the survey tools and instruments (e.g., questionnaire).
- Pre-test the survey tools and instruments.

Conducting the Survey

- Prepare instruments, staff and equipment for survey administration, including selecting a contractor, if used.
- Collect data from respondents.
- Prepare data for analysis.
- Analyze the data.

Communicating Survey Results

- Identify stakeholder groups to report survey results.
- Determine methods to report survey results.
- Prepare survey results report.
- Communicate results to interested individuals or groups.

Implementing Survey Results

- Develop and implement initiatives to address the survey results.
- Gain additional feedback from stakeholders.
- Evaluate the successes and challenges of the survey project.
- Plan future satisfaction measurement issues.

Another useful resource on conducting surveys in the public sector (*Client Satisfaction Surveys*, October 1998) was prepared by the Alberta Auditor General's Office. This document is available on the Internet at <http://www.oag.ab.ca> under "Reading Room."

Statistics and Survey Research Terms

Statistical Inference: Using information from a sample to draw conclusions (inferences) about the population from which the sample was drawn.

Population: Any entire collection of persons or things from which we may collect data. It is the entire group we wish to describe or draw conclusions about.

Sample: A subset of units selected from the larger group (the population). Samples are studied, for reasons of efficiency, to draw valid conclusions about the population.

Census Sample: A sample drawn from a finite population that includes all members of the population.

Random Sample: A subset of a population where every item in the population has the same probability of being in the sample. The primary goal of survey research is to use information collected from a sample to characterize a certain population.

Convenience Sample: A sample where cases are selected, in part or in whole, at the convenience of the researcher (e.g., selecting a sample of students in a school by standing in the hall and interviewing those students who walk by).

Stratified Sample: A sample selected to ensure that key characteristics of the target population (e.g., gender, age, geographic distribution) are adequately represented.

Judgement Sample: (also referred to as "purposive sampling") A sample selected based on the researcher's assessment of their suitability for inclusion in the sample (e.g., selecting persons to a sample who, in the researcher's judgment, are likely to be well informed about the issue under study).

Confidence Interval: A survey result obtained from a random sample of the target population has a confidence interval, expressed as a percentage above and below the obtained result, which indicates the expected variation from the obtained survey result as a consequence of sampling and diversity among respondents. Confidence intervals indicate whether differences in survey results over time (or differences among respondent groups to the same question) are likely the result of sampling variation or represent actual differences.

Standard Deviation: A measure of the spread or dispersion of a set of data. The more widely the values are spread out, the larger the standard deviation.

Survey Instrument (Questionnaire): A set of questions designed and used to gather specific information from survey respondents.

Scales (Measurement type): A basis for ordering or categorizing data to facilitate meaningful comparisons of the aggregate data. Nominal scales are used for categorizing/ordering data having a limited number of possible outcomes that cannot be placed in any order representing the intrinsic properties of the measurements (e.g., male/female). Ordinal scales are used when the relative values of the data being collected are defined in terms of being lesser, equal to or greater than data elements (e.g., strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree). Interval scales are used when the magnitude of the differences among the observational units is defined in quantitative terms (e.g., amount of money expressed in dollars, weight in pounds, age in years).

Mean: The mean (or "average") of a set of observations is simply their sum, divided by the total number of observations.

Weighted Average: A procedure for combining the mean of two or more groups of different sizes that takes the size of the groups into account when computing the overall average.

Appendix 3

Setting Targets for Performance Measures

Targets are relevant for performance measures at all levels of Alberta's learning system, including school, authority and provincial levels of performance. The information provided below relates specifically to school and authorities target-setting.

Definition

A target is a desired level of performance to be attained by a specified time. Targets are a commitment to improvement.

Purpose

Targets support continuous improvement and are used to assess and report achievement in relation to the desired level of performance. Targets indicate the extent of improvement the organization is striving to achieve by a point in time (e.g., by a certain year), and provide a focus for efforts to achieve improvement, including resource allocation, staffing and strategy development and implementation.

Targets are required for provincial achievement tests. Authorities assess their performance against targets they have set.

Principles

1. Targets for performance measures are a valuable part of planning, assessment and reporting.
2. Targets should be meaningful, achievable and challenging.
3. Targets should benefit students and help improve student learning.
4. Target setting should be an interactive process that takes a variety of qualitative and quantitative information into account. Private school authority and provincial performance over time provide a frame of reference for use in setting targets. Private school targets will vary from provincial targets, taking into consideration school and community characteristics, past results and other information.
5. Targets should be communicated to parents and the community so that they can support school efforts to improve education for students.

Target Requirements for Required Measures (Achievement Test results)

1. Targets need to be expressed quantitatively in relation to a whole (e.g., percentages, ratios).
2. Authority targets need to be set in relation to provincial targets and results, as well as to authority results.
3. Authority targets are required for measures for which there is historical data. Specifically: one-year targets when there are two years of data, two-year targets when there are three years of data, and three-year targets when there are four or more years of data.
4. Targets need to focus on improvement to attain a high level of performance.

Note on phase in of targets for student results on diploma examinations: Diploma examinations are being made directly comparable from year to year by building a common set of questions (anchor items) into the machine-scored portion and equating cut scores. Once the exam is comparable for a course, authority targets will be required for diploma exam results. See the table on page 21 for implementation of comparable exams and targets for diploma exam results over the next few years. The information on the Diploma Examination Program available online at <http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/testing/diploma/dip_gib/> will be updated as more information becomes available about diploma exam comparability over time.

Guidelines for Setting Targets

1. Consider a wide variety of information in setting targets: past performance, including trends over time on the measure under consideration as well as related measures (e.g., using prior years' Grade 3 achievement test results to set Grade 6 achievement test results), student or school characteristics, resources, both financial and human, that can be applied to achieve improvement, etc.
2. Target setting should be consistent with data collection methods. Data reliability and variability should be considered in target setting.
3. Involve stakeholders in setting targets at each level. Parent advisory councils, staff, and community members should have input in setting school-level targets.
4. When setting targets, prioritize to focus on areas needing improvement, and ensure organizational capacity and resources are in place, including

budget, staff and concrete actions of benefit to student learning that will be taken to improve results and achieve the targets.

5. Set targets in relation to other targets, (i.e., measures that impact each other). For example, performance on achievement tests in Grade 3 has implications for performance in Grade 6 three years later.
6. Visual displays, such as trend-line graphs and projections, aid in illustrating results and in setting targets. Trend lines based on at least five years of historical data or rolling three-year averages to smooth out year-to-year variability (particularly evident in smaller authorities), shift the focus from smaller, year-to-year changes to providing information about the longer term direction of the data, including estimates of future results.
7. Professional judgment that takes the local context into account, as well as local and provincial results, is needed for setting targets. In other words, trend data, graphs and projections are an aid to target-setting – they do not in themselves determine the targets.

Timelines for Diploma Exam Equating/Target Setting

Alberta Education is working to make the results of diploma examinations directly comparable from year to year. This is being done by building in a common set of test items (anchor items) and adjusting student scores so the diploma examination standards remain constant over time (equating). The process varies in relation to subject-specific challenges.

Provided below is the schedule Alberta Education is using over the next few years for enhancing comparability of the results of diploma examinations and for setting targets for the exams. Authorities will be required to start setting targets for their examination results when there is one year of results that can be compared to the baseline year results (i.e., two years of equated results). Detailed information will be provided online as it becomes available at <http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/testing/diploma/dip_gib/>.

School Year	Social Studies 30 Social Studies 33	Pure Mathematics 30 Physics 30 Chemistry 30	English Language Arts 30-1 English Language Arts 30-2 Applied Mathematics 30 Biology 30
2003/04	Baseline established for equating.		
2004/05	• Two years of comparable results available. • Set targets for 2006/07 (1st year of 2006/07 – 2008/09 plan).	Baseline established for equating.	
2005/06	• Three years of comparable results available. • Set targets for 2007/08 and 2008/09 (1st and 2nd years of 2007/08 – 2009/10 plan).	• Two years of comparable results available. • Set one-year target for 2007/08 (1st year of 2007/08 – 2009/10 plan).	Baseline established for equating.
2006/07	• Four years of comparable results available. • Assess achievement of 2006/07 targets. • Confirm targets for 2008/09 (1st year of 2008/09 – 2010/11 plan).	• Three years of comparable results available. • Set targets for 2008/09 and 2009/10 (1st and 2nd year of 2008/09 – 2010/11 plan).	• Two years of comparable results available. • Set target for 2008/09 (1st year of 2008/09 – 2010/11 plan).
2007/08	• Five years of comparable results available. • Assess achievement of 2007/08 targets. • No targets set for 2009/10 – 2011/12 plan (new curriculum is implemented in 2009/10).	• Four years of comparable results available. • Confirm targets for 2008/09 and 2009/10 and set targets for 2010/11 (3rd year of 2008/09 – 2010/11 plan). • Assess achievement of 2007/08 targets.	• Three years of comparable results available. • Set targets for 2009/10 and 2010/11 (1st and 2nd years of 2009/10 – 2010/11 plan).
2008/09	• Six years of comparable results. • Assess achievement of 2008/09 targets. • No targets set for 2010/11 – 2012/13 plan (new curriculum is implemented in 2009/10).	Cycle continues; target setting and assessment of results roll forward a year.	• Four years of comparable results available. • Confirm targets for 2009/10 and 2010/11 and set targets for 2011/12 (3rd year of 2009/10 – 2011/12 plan). • Assess achievement of 2008/09 targets.
2009/10	New curriculum implemented.	Cycle continues; target setting and assessment of results roll forward a year.	Cycle continues; target setting and assessment of results roll forward a year.

Note: Alberta Education will establish baseline examinations for English versions of the exams only (not Français 30 or French versions, due to small populations). Similarly, there will not be an equating process established for Science 30 exams, because of small populations. Authorities will be advised of any changes to the schedule.

Appendix 4

Planning and Accountability Terms

Accountability: An obligation to answer for assigned responsibilities, e.g., for use of funds, results achieved and for taking action to make continuous improvement and achieve desired results.

Baseline: A set of data used as a starting point to measure changes over time using the same methodology.

Continuous Improvement: Using performance results to adjust strategies and practices so that improvement in performance is achieved over time.

Goals: Goals are broad statements that look towards the long term and steer organizations in the direction of realizing their vision. Goals are typically expressed as desired conditions or aims.

Issues: An issue is a condition that may affect the organization's ability to fulfill its mandate or achieve its goals.

Mission Statement: A mission statement is a clear, concise description of a school private school authority's overall purpose and role. It gives direction to the programs and services that the authorities provides for its students.

Outcomes: Outcomes are measurable statements of what private school authorities and schools seek to achieve. In broad terms, they answer the question, "What will this look like when we get to where we want to be?"

Performance Measures: Performance measures provide information on important, quantifiable aspects of the education system. They enable authorities to assess progress toward achieving goals and outcomes.

Principles and Beliefs: Principles and beliefs guide decision-making and provide a foundation for developing mission, vision and goals.

Profile: A profile is a brief description of the private school authorities or school that gives context for the plan. Profiles include characteristics of communities, students, programs and location.

Strategies: Strategies are actions that private school authorities and schools take to achieve goals and desired outcomes that meet the needs of all

their students. They address local circumstances, issues, trends and opportunities.

Targets: Targets show desired levels of performance to be attained by a certain time. Targets are expressed quantitatively.

Trend: A trend shows a direction of data over time, e.g., enrolment growth.

Vision: A vision describes a possible and desired future state for the organization, grounded in reality, which inspires and guides decisions and actions.

Testing Related Terms

Test Equating: Test equating is a procedure that establishes the relationship between scores from two or more tests and places those scores on a common scale so that student test results from different forms can be directly compared. This procedure is usually applied in situations where multiple test forms, similar in content but possibly different in test difficulty, are administered on different test dates. A variety of different statistical procedures can be used to equate tests scores. Equated scores from different forms can be directly compared. Equated scores typically will represent the same level of achievement, no matter which form the student wrote.

Anchor Item: Anchor items are used in the test-equating procedures currently applied by the Learner Assessment Branch. Since all students answer the same set of anchor items, it is possible to determine the relative difficulty of the different forms and adjust student scores appropriately. Sets of anchor items are chosen to represent the curriculum and the range of item difficulties as broadly as possible. In order to preserve the validity of the anchor items, they must be kept secure.

Appendix 5

References

Source material for this guide

Alberta Education (2003). K-12 Learning System Policy, Regulations and Forms Manual (Revised, February 10, 2003). <http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/educationguide/pol-plan/polregs/toc.asp>

Alberta Finance (1998). Results-Oriented Government: A Guide to Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement in the Public Sector (September 28, 1998) <http://www.finance.gov.ab.ca/> (Select "Publications and Forms", then "Performance Measurement", then "Other Publications").

Alberta Finance (Rick Goodkey and Ken Ogata) (1998). Redefining Government Performance (July 16, 1998). <http://www.finance.gov.ab.ca/> (Select "Publications and Forms", then "Performance Measurement", then "Other Publications").

Auditor General Alberta (2004). Accountability in the Learning Sector (January 9, 2004). <http://www.oag.ab.ca> (Select "The Reading Room", then the publication title).

Auditor General Alberta (1997). Government Accountability (February, 1997). <http://www.oag.ab.ca> (Select "The Reading Room", then the publication title).

Government of Alberta (1995). Government Accountability Act. <http://www.qp.gov.ab.ca/documents/> .

Government of Alberta (1995). School Act (Revised Statutes of Alberta, 2000). <http://www.qp.gov.ab.ca/documents/>

Appendix 6

Revised Reporting Requirements for November 2005 Private School AERR

The 2005 Annual Education Results Report includes the following components:

- A **message** from the board chair (optional)
- An **accountability statement**, worded as follows:
  The annual education results report for ***(name of private school authority)*** the ***(year)*** school year was prepared under the direction of the board in accordance with the responsibilities specified in the School Act, the Government Accountability Act, Alberta Education Policy 2.1.1 ("Accountability in Education: School Private school authority Accountability") and the provincial government's accounting policies. The Board of Directors is committed to using the results in this report, to the best of our abilities, to improve the quality of education for students in our authorities. We will use the results to develop sound strategies for our three-year education plan to ensure that all our students can acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to be self-reliant, responsible, caring and contributing members of society.
- Information on how the report was or will be communicated to parents and the school community.
- Highlights for the previous school year of the private school authority's **accomplishments** (impact of major activities/strategies), including provincially funded initiatives and programs (e.g., AISI, SHIP, High Speed Networking, ECS) as appropriate.
- Report the private school authority's **performance measures results** in relation to their goals, outcomes and targets, including:
  - The most recent five years of authority and provincial results for provincial achievement tests* and diploma exams, including PAT results for all subjects and grades and participation rates for diploma exams, and
  - The 2004/05 results in relation to school private school authority and targets for that year; for provincial achievement tests, also report the provincial target for 2004/05, and

* For PATs, cohort reporting is required; reporting results for writers is optional.

- Assessment of results, (improved, no change, declined; met or did not meet target) and factors affecting performance, and
- Results for all measures in the 2004-07 education plan.

- **Summary of Financial results**
  - provide key financial information about the school year, such as significant changes over the prior year, the annual operating surplus or deficit, accumulated operating surplus and capital reserves,
  - include program expenditure information in a table or graph format for the primary audience – parents and other members of the community;
  - indicate how the reader can access additional information, including the Audited Financial Statement.
- **Capital and Facilities Projects**: (optional) highlight, for parents and the school community, progress on major facilities projects for the previous school year (if applicable), focusing on benefits to students.
- Identify **future challenges**, including areas for improvement and how the authority will address these.